

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 HAVANA 01654 191839Z

ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

-----127454 191840Z /43

O 191648Z JUN 78

FM USINT HAVANA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2213

S E C R E T HAVANA 1654

NODIS

EO 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINS CU RQ

SUBJ: CASTRO ON AMCIT POLITICAL PRISONERS

1.

1. FIDEL CASTRO'S JUNE 16 AFFIRMATION TO BARBARA WALTERS, RICHARD VALERIANI, AND ED RABEL (ABC, NBC, AND CBS) THAT HE WOULD FAVOR RELEASING ALL FOUR AMCIT POLITICAL PRISONERS IF THE FOUR PUERTO RICAN PRISONERS HELD BY US ARE RELEASED APPEARS TO BE A SIGNIFICANT SHIFT IN THE CUBAN LEADERS POSITION. BELGIAN AMBASSADOR HERE, ACCORDING TO ACCOUNT HE GAVE TO USINT FUNCTIONARY, WAS INFORMED BY CUBAN VICE-PRESIDENT AND FOREIGN POLICY KINGPIN CARLOS RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ SAME DAY (JUNE 16) THAT WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE REPORTING CUBAN INTEREST IN EXCHANGING LUNT FOR LEBRON WAS "FALSE" AND WOULD COMPLICATE US-CUBAN RELATIONS. IN ADDITION, CASTRO HIMSELF TOLD CONGRESSMEN SOLARZ AND BEILENSEN, JUNE 12 (SEE HAVANA 1598), THAT RELEASE OF AMCIT POLITICAL PRISONERS NOW WOULD BE MISUNDERSTOOD AND WOULD CAUSE INTERNAL POLITICAL PROBLEMS IN CUBA.

2. CASTRO, WHILE CITING VIRTUE OF EXCHANGE OF ALL AMCIT PRISONERS FOR PUERTO RICAN PRISONERS, SAYS THAT CURRENT INDICATIONS OF U.S. WILLINGNESS TO EXCHANGE LEBRON AND TWO OTHER PRISONERS FOR LUNT IS INSUFFICIENT. HE POINTS OUT

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 HAVANA 01654 191839Z

THAT LEBRON IS HOLDING OUT FOR RELEASE OF ENTIRE GROUP OF FOUR PUERTO RICAN PRISONERS. CASTRO ADDS THAT LEBRON AND HERE PUERTO RICAN CO-PRISONERS MUST MAKE THE DECISION. THUS, CASTRO IS SAYING THAT, UNLESS USG FINDS IT POSSIBLE TO INCLUDE FOURTH PUERTO RICAN (OSCAR COLLAZO WHO ATTEMPTED TO ASSASSINATE PRESIDENT TRUMAN IN 1951), AMERICANCITIZEN POLITICAL PRISONERS CANNOT BE RELEASED. (COMMENT: CASTRO'S INSISTENCE

ON INCLUDING PRESIDENTIAL ASSASSINATION FIGURE MAY STEM FROM HIS OWN COMPLAINTS TO US JOURNALISTS, JUNE 12, THAT USG HAS NEVER APOLOGIZED TO HIM FOR ITS VARIOUS EFFORTS DURING 1960'S TO ASSASSINATE HIM AND OTHER CUBAN LEADERS.)

3. DESPITE OBVIOUS POLITICAL PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN COLLAZO RELEASE, USINT NOTES (SEE 77 STATE 228304) THAT, AS FAR AS LEGAL REQUIREMENTS ARE CONCERNED, COLLAZO BECAME ELIGIBLE FOR PAROLE CONSIDERATION MORE THAN TWELVE YEARS AGO. GIVEN FACT THAT AMCIT POLITICAL PRISONERS ARE UNLIKELY TO BE RELEASED UNDER ANY OTHER CONDITIONS, USINT URGES THAT COLLAZO'S INCLUSION IN POSSIBLE EXCHANGE OFFER TO CUBANS BE SERIOUSLY STUDIED. (NOTE ALSO THAT RELEASE OF FOUR PUERTO RICANS BEFORE MEETING OF COMMITTEE OF 24 WOULD HELP GIVE LIE TO ANY ACCUSATIONS THAT US IS SUPPRESSING PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE PARTISANS.)

4. IN CONSIDERING HOW TO PROCEED IN THIS MATTER, WE ALSO NOTE THAT CASTRO POINTS UP ABSENCE OF DIRECT US-CUBAN CONTACT ON THIS MATTER. HE CHARACTERIZES CONTACTS SO FAR AS "CONSULTATIONS VIA INDIRECT MEANS", NOT "NEGOTIATIONS". IN VIEW OF HIS EARLIER COMPLAINTS IN SAME INTERVIEW THAT USG DID NOT USE USINT TO CLARIFY ITS DOUBTS ON SHABA INCIDENT, WE WONDER WHETHER NEXT APPROACH TO CUBANS ON THIS MATTER MIGHT BE BETTER EXECUTED THROUGH USINT, RATHER THAN VOGEL.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 HAVANA 01654 191839Z

5. INFORMAL TRANSLATION OF CASTRO'S STATEMENTS (PUBLISHED IN GRANMA, JUNE 19) FOLLOWS:

BEGIN TEXT

VALERIANI - I UNDERSTAND THAT NEGOTIATIONS ARE TAKING PLACE TO RELEASE LUNT IN EXCHANGE FOR LOLITA LEBRON. ARE YOU READY TO DO THIS?

CASTRO - "LOOK, WE CANNOT TALK YET ABOUT NEGOTIATIONS. THERE HAVE BEEN SOME CONSULTATIONS THROUGH INDIRECT MEANS REGARDING OUR DISPOSITION IN THIS REGARD. WE WOULD RELEASE LUNT WITH PLEASURE IF THE PUERTO RICAN PATRIOTS ARE RELEASED. BUT, WHAT IS HAPPENING? AS FAR AS I UNDERSTAND, THEY ARE TALKING ABOUT RELEASING LOLITA LEBRON AND TWO MORE; BUT I THINK THAT LOLITA WILL NOT ACCEPT BEING RELEASED ALONE. I HAVE HEARD THAT SHE WOULD AGREE IF THEY RELEASE THE REST OF HER COMRADES. I THINK THAT THERE ARE FOUR, I THINK THAT THEY ARE FOUR. (FYI REPETITION IS GIVEN IN TEXT. END FYI) THUS, FOR OUR PART, WE ARE READY TO MAKE THIS ARRANGEMENT, WE ARE READY TO RELEASE LUNT. THIS PROBLEM MUST BE DECIDED BY THE PUERTO RICAN PRISONERS THEMSELVES AND BY LOLITA LEBRON HERSELF. WE WERE ASKED OUR OPINION AND WE SAID, THROUGH INDIRECT MEANS, THAT WE AGREED."

WALTERS - IF LOLITA LEBRON WITH HER FRIENDS, THE FOUR THAT
YOU SAY, ARE FREED, WOULD YOU FREE FOUR PRISONERS?
CASTRO - OK, WE WOULD HAVE TO THINK ABOUT THIS. ARE YOU
REFERRING TO AMERICANS? I THINK THAT ONLY FOUR REMAIN,
BECAUSE MOST OF THE AMERICANS THAT WERE OUR PRISONERS HAVE
BEEN RELEASED IN RECENT MONTHS. VERY FEW REMAIN, BUT THE
PRINCIPAL ONE IS LUNT. ALL RIGHT, WITH RESPECT TO THE OTHERS,
IF THE PROBLEM IS POSED, I WOULD BE IN FAVOR OF FREEING THE
PRISONERS. I CANNOT PROMISE, BECAUSE AS I HAVE SAID, I DO
NOT TAKE UNILATERAL DECISIONS; BUT I WOULD BE IN FAVOR OF THIS,
IT WOULD BE A PLEASURE, I WOULD NOT HAVE ANY OBJECTION, BECAUSE
LUNT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT. AND THEN WE WOULD NOT HAVE ANY US
PRISONERS AND YOU WOULD NOT HAVE THESE PUERTO RICAN PATRIOTS IN
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 HAVANA 01654 191839Z

PRISON. END TEXT.
GLASSMAN

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS CONFERENCES, POLITICAL PRISONERS, PRISONERS RELEASE, CAT-B
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978HAVANA01654
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: P840166-1854
Format: TEL
From: HAVANA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780645/aaaabmxv.tel
Line Count: 138
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 91004186-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 aug 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2302336
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CASTRO ON AMCIT POLITICAL PRISONERS
TAGS: PINS, SHUM, CU, RQ, US, (CASTRO, FIDEL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/91004186-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014